



PRESS RELEASE

European Transport Workers' Federation (ETF) * International Transport Workers' Federation (ITF)

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'Please pack less', baggage handlers ask passengers

Across Europe today airport staff will be asking passengers to pack less when they fly, in order to save them from injury. At 35 airports in 15 countries they will be handing out 100,000 leaflets and luggage stickers as part of a campaign by the ETF (European Transport Workers' Federation) and ITF (International Transport Workers' Federation) to introduce realistic weight limits and protect check-in staff and ground handlers from work-related injuries.

Luggage by air is exempt from the health and safety weight limits laid down in other industries – making baggage handlers many times more likely to suffer musculoskeletal injury than other workers. Not only does luggage often exceed all recognised safe limits, but it also has to be handled in restricted areas such as aircraft holds where mechanical aids and recommended lifting positions are impossible.

The ETF and ITF are calling for an immediate top limit of 23kg per item, with a phased reduction to 15kg. They would like to see hand luggage limited to 6kg per bag to avoid the current free-for-all on items stowed in overhead lockers which, they believe, potentially threatens cabin crew and passengers alike. More details can be found at www.packless.org

The message that will be passed on to passengers today – and, it's hoped, to airlines and the European Union – is:

"Pack less and take the load off..."

...your wallet – is your suitcase too heavy every time you travel? Most airlines now charge extra for luggage over 23kg. What's more there's no standard fee for excess baggage weight so they can charge you what they like

...the people who help you fly – check-in staff and baggage handlers make your trip possible. Heavy loads cause injury to the people who handle your bags – they have to load them while working on their knees because conditions on aircraft are cramped. And yours is only one of

The ETF represents more than 2.5 million transport workers from 223 transport unions and 40 European countries, in the following sectors: railways, road transport and logistics, maritime transport, inland navigation, civil aviation, ports & docks, tourism and fisheries.

thousands of suitcases. Unlike in other industries, there are no weight limits for airlines; that's why baggage handlers may be more likely to be injured than other workers

...**the planet** – lighter baggage means lighter planes, lower fuel consumption and fewer carbon emissions.

So, pack less every time.”

Enrique Carmona, President of the ETF's Ground Staff Committee commented: “Every day hugely heavy loads that would be rejected in just about any other workplace are being handled by check-in staff and baggage handlers. The result is too often injuries that can last a lifetime. That's why we are asking travellers to think of the people who help them on their way, and asking airlines and politicians to close the gap that still exists in the plans to prevent these disorders.”

François Ballester, ETF Civil Aviation Political Secretary, added: “A change in limits is dangerously overdue, and we at the ETF are also particularly calling on the legislators of the European Union to address this by speedily finalising a proposal for a Directive on musculoskeletal diseases in order to reduce these all too real hazards.”

A picture of the leaflet is attached, along with a JPEG of the campaign logo

For further information, please contact:

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